

GOVERNMENT/INDUSTRY AERONAUTICAL CHARTING FORUM

Instrument Procedures Subgroup

April 29-30, 1996

RECOMMENDATION DOCUMENT

FAA Control # 96-01-166

SUBJECT: Determining Descent Point of Flyby Waypoints (Originally Submitted as Definition of "On Course" – title changed at ACF 97-01)

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: A question that has long puzzled pilots is the question under IFR Rules of what constitutes being "on course". This question is particularly important for a number of reasons including obstacle protection when turning on course and particularly when deciding when it is proper to begin descent where terrain protection is to be provided by maintaining the published course. A recent airline accident was caused in large part by the airplane descending when the aircraft had unintentionally strayed from the published arrival route on which obstacle protection was based upon maintaining course. So what is considered to be "on course"? Is it when the needle on the CDI is not fully deflected? Is it when the CDI needle is half deflected so there is potentially some additional level of conservatism? Should it be based on a figure shown on a cross track indicator?

RECOMMENDATION: Establish the definition for "on course" to be an understandable definition which also shows the pilot the edge of obstacle containment.

COMMENTS: This recommendation affects the Pilot Controller Glossary and FAA Order 8260.3B.

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INITIAL DISCUSSION (Meeting 96-01): Wally Roberts, ALPA, presented the issue stating that the current definitions in the pilot/controller glossary were inadequate. Paul Best, AFS-420, stated that Flight Standards had studied this issue in the past to no definitive conclusion. He recommended that the ALPA group conduct a study and present a recommendation at the next meeting. ALPA accepted. **ACTION: ALPA.**

MEETING 96-02: Wally Roberts, ALPA, led the discussion noting that the current definition of "on course" does not support GPS navigation. Don Pate, AFS-450, noted that further discussion of the issue must include resolution of changing sensitivities and the capabilities of receivers to put the pilot on course. RTCA is also addressing the issue as to how it relates to descent points using GPS/FMS systems. A telcon will be held to discuss this at a later date - interested parties are: ALPA, APA, Jeppesen and AFS-420/440/450. AFS-450 will take the lead in establishing the telcon. **ACTION: AFS-450.**

MEETING 97-01: Don Pate, AFS-450, briefed that a telcon was held on March 14 to discuss this issue. Representatives of AFS-440, AFS-450 and ALPA participated. The discussion transcended to “when may descent begin on flyby waypoints”. ALPA took an IOU to prepare a paper on defining “on course” for ACF 97-1; however, it was not presented. This issue will be a subject of discussion at a scheduled meeting between ALPA and AFS-440/450 on April 25. It was agreed to change the issue title to Read: “Determining Descent Point on Flyby Waypoints”. It was suggested that AFS-410 be a part of the solution. AFS-450 will continue working the issue and report results of the April 25 meeting at the next ACF. **ACTION: AFS-450.**

MEETING 97-02: The discussion on “when may descent begin on flyby waypoints” continued. Jim Terpstra, Jeppesen, explained Canada’s desire to establish a flyover fix on the approach course inside the IF. He also recommended that Canada be invited to attend ACF meetings. ALPA took an IOU to prepare a paper defining “on course” at meeting 97-01; however, it was not presented. AFS-450, took an IOU to report progress on the issue at meeting 97-01; however, no report was given. Wally Roberts, ALPA, agreed to send Howard Swancy, Afs-420, a copy of the ALPA “on course” paper. **ACTION: ALPA and AFS-450.**

MEETING 98-01: Jack Corman, AFS-420, briefed that work is not complete on this issue. Report deferred to the next meeting. **ACTION: AFS-420.**

MEETING 98-02: Paul Best, AFS-400, briefed that criteria have been reviewed and that using the fix bisector as a descent point will provide obstruction clearance. Wally Roberts, ALPA, noted that determining the fix bisector is equipment specific. Paul agreed to coordinate with the Tech Center to ensure a valid FAA position on this issue. He will also coordinate with Carl Moore, AFS-420, to incorporate results of his study into the AIM. **ACTION: AFS-400 (NAS NRS).**

MEETING 99-01: No report available as the AFS-400 NAS NRS was unable to attend the meeting. **ACTION: AFS-400 (NAS NRS).**

MEETING 99-02: Paul Best, AFS-400 (NAS NRS), briefed that FAA General Council (AGC) is still working on a FAA definition of “on course”; however, he has no timetable indicating when it will be ready for release. Wally Roberts, ALPA, agreed to prepare a definition for consideration working through Paul as the FAA Flight Standards point of contact. Once a definition is developed, AFS-420 will present it for AIM publication. Subsequent to the meeting, Wally advised that ALPA would like to further address the ‘bisector concept’ to ensure that proposed RNP protected airspace issues are addressed in the “established on course” definition. He indicated that he requests to work this issue jointly with AFS-420. **ACTION: ALPA, AFS-400 (NAS NRS) and AFS-420.**

MEETING 00-01: At meeting 99-02, ALPA agreed to prepare a draft definition of “on course” working through Paul Best as the FAA Flight Standards point of contact. Bill Hammett noted that a copy of Carl Moore’s, AFS-420, paper on using the bisector as descent point on flyby waypoints is included in the meeting handout. Jim Terpstra, Jeppesen, noted that this is a good example of the type item that should be included in the proposed AC90-XX. He also stated that this philosophy should be written somewhere as an official source document for data base manufacturers. Kevin Comstock, ALPA, echoed that the paper should be given wide dissemination and perhaps included in the AIM as a temporary measure. Kevin also noted that ALPA believes that a limitation on ground speed should be included in the bisector concept to ensure containment within the obstacle area. AFS-420 will pursue further publication of the paper. **ACTION: AFS-420.**

MEETING 00-02: Dave Eckles, AFS-420, presented a status update paper on the issue. Subsequent to the last ACF, it has been determined that certain navigation equipment will not permit descent from the intermediate fix altitude to the FAF altitude unless the aircraft is within a specified distance of the intermediate course, on an intercept heading, or in some cases, wings level. The result is that the altitude to be lost between the IF and FAF may exceed TERPS descent gradient standards. A new study is underway within AFS-420 to evaluate various associated parameters such as ground speed, angle of turn, altitude to be lost, and bank angle and their interrelated effect on required intermediate segment length. Results of the study will be incorporated into TERPS for use in procedure design. **ACTION: AFS-420.**

MEETING 01-01: Dave Eckles, AFS-420, briefed that there are still some open issues and the matter is not fully resolved within AFS-420. When resolved, pilot education material for the AIM will be developed. **ACTION: AFS-420.**
